Iowa Chess News

En Passant

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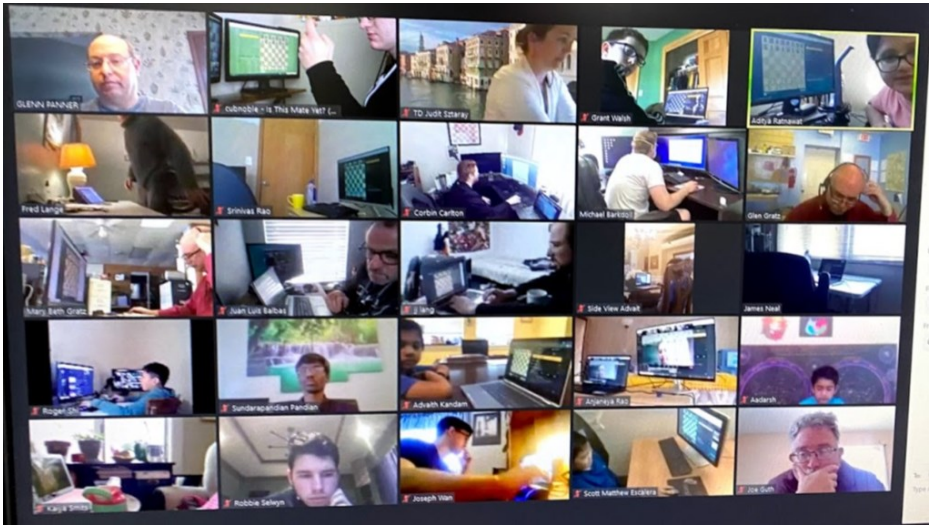

The 2021 US Amateur Team North tournament took place online this year. Several Iowans participated in the highly modified team event.

Below are all of the tournaments scheduled in Iowa

Currently—due to the pandemic, Iowa does not have any tournaments scheduled in the near future.

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Hello From the Editor:

Hello, I am Cub Noble, I am a Class A player and have been playing competitive chess for about a decade.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, I wrote a couple of newsletters for the Cedar Falls area. As a result, I was asked to help out with sending the En Passant to the rest of the state.

Inside, you will see contributions from Eric Vigil, Joseph Wan, James Neal, Owen Fiedorowicz, Anjali Lodh, Luis Peralta, Joseph Pregon, and James Hodina.

I hope everyone has been, is, and will continue to be safe during these uncertain times.

Enjoy the chess!

Join the Iowa State Chess Association!

The Iowa State Chess Association is a non-profit organization devoted exclusively to the promotion of chess in Iowa.

Join or renew by sending dues to the IASCA Secretary:

Benjamin Darr
419 Winona St.
Dubuque, IA 52001

Or Join on our website via Iowa-Chess.org

Membership Dues:

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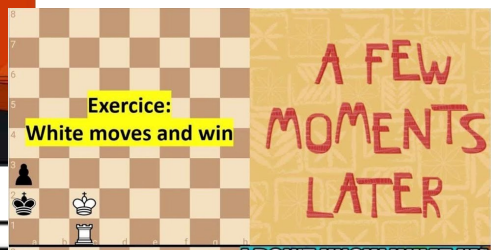
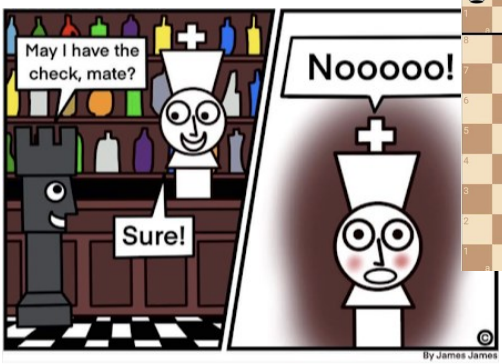
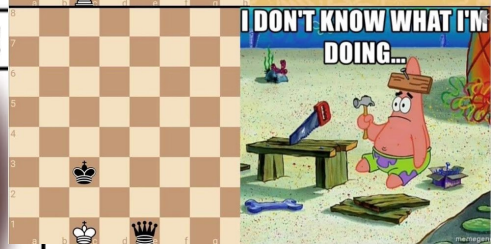






President's Update

By Eric Vigil

The year in Iowa Chess

2020 Edition

Another year down……

As everyone knows…..

Nothing big happened this year

……

Oh well a couple of things. As you know Covid has put quite a damper on over the board chess. We started the year off with a bang, Alex Richter defeating GM Timur Gareyev in Burlington. Then the Leather Jackets finished the qualifying cycle with our last major over the board open tournament. Sputtering as it may have been we completed an over the board closed tournament, I think it was one of the only over the board events in July. Arshaq Saleem won and then published the story of the Iowa Closed in Chess Life Magazine.

Iowa chess has started into the online realm of chess tournaments. Jim Hodina ran the Iowa Scholastic Individual Team Tournament online with 62 players. Gokul Thangavel and Nathan Chen have teamed up for two scholastic online events. James Neal has run online events. James Freerkson started an online tournament website, All Access Chess, that have daily tournaments with a combined monthly entry fee.

Scholastics we are planning to do over the board tournaments to pick Iowa's representatives for the Barber, Denker, Senior and Harring National Invitational tournaments that will hopefully be held with the US Open in Cherry Hill, NJ in August.

I cannot say I am a big online chess fan, I play online, but tournaments for me are face to face. To watch your opponent sweat. To smell them, to feel their fear when you play Nh5 or some other crazy move that just might have some merit. To find the queen sacrifice when your opponent has thought you were a goner when he went up a rook but you win the game. Hanging around the crosstable's trying to figure out if you still stand a chance at winning some money,

even though you have to stay to the end because you carpooled with 5 other people. Also trying to figure out if your friend's are still in the running. Calculating how many rating points you will win if you win your last game (or lose if you lose your last game.)

I am planning the Iowa Class tournament to happen in either June or July. I was thinking June, but then we have to get all of the scholastic qualifying tournaments done July 1st. So I am leaning to have the Iowa Class Championships and Annual Meeting in July. The tournaments will be posted on iowachess.org. In running over the board tournaments, I figure there will be enough vaccine by May that anyone who wants a vaccine will be able to get one. I will be implementing a play at your own risk policy.

I will be stepping down as the president the next meeting. At the moment I will be stepping up as Scholastic Director. I will continue to be around to run tournaments and offer support to the board.

When chess does resume over the board, it is possible with many people picking up chess as a hobby online over the pandemic there will be a great boom. The Netflix Mini series "The Queen's Gambit" has increased Chess's popularity, but will it translate to over the board? Will people who have been staying at home want more exotic and active vacations instead of over the board chess? There are a lot of questions that will be answered in the next few months.

Iowa Chess Players thank you for your support. Without it, I would not be able to be your president. Please give your support to my successor.

IASCA
IOWA STATE CHESS ASSOCIATION

2021 USAT North: A Championship Run

By: Joseph Wan

Back in February of 2015, my friend NM (then Expert) James Neal invited me to play the United States Amateur Team (USAT) North tournament. I was unavailable that year, but in 2016 James and I headed two Thunder King teams, and I attended my very first USAT tournament. And boy, was it fun. It wasn't like a typical tournament, where individuals were competing against individuals for the ultimate crown; the team-based aspect added an extra layer of fun and excitement. Ever since 2016, I have returned for four more USAT Norths, with the 2020 edition being my last over the board tournament before the dreaded COVID-19 struck.

With COVID still being a prominent issue, I wasn't sure if there would be a chance to play the 2021 USAT North in person, or a chance to play it at all! Thanks to the efforts of TDs Glenn Panner, Judit Sztaray, and Maret Thorpe, I was able to continue my tradition, this year on chess.com.

Back in fall of 2020, NM James Neal and I had already been discussing forming a solid team for the 2021 USAT North. Our final roster going into the event was:

(TK) Covidians:
Board 1: NM Joseph Wan (2257)
Board 2: NM Tim McEntee (2200), four-time Iowa State Champion
Board 3: NM James Neal (2174)
Board 4: Owen Fiedorowicz (1989), long-time Iowa friend, who had recently moved to Canada

Average Team Rating: 2155

Rated at 2155, we were one of four teams with average ratings of over 2100, and, seeded fourth, were one of the favorites to win the championship. Would we be able to hold strong and seize the crown?

Round 1:

Opponent:
Saratoga High School
Board 1: Yashom Kapoor (1532)
Board 2: Samik Pattanayak (1463)
Board 3: Dhilon Prasad (873)
Board 4: Lisa Fung (Unr.)
Average Rating: 1289

Straightaway, the event got off to an interesting start, as neither mine nor James's opponent showed up! After receiving our forfeit wins, we spent the rest of the time chatting about our teammates' games. Owen finished off his opponent rather quickly, so that left Tim, who seemed to be struggling after some

strong, perhaps unexpected, opening play from Pattanayak. But, as James rightfully predicted, once Tim escaped to the endgame, he had no problems bringing home the win, sealing our round 4-0.

Round 1 Result: Saratoga High School vs. (TK) Covidians, 0-4

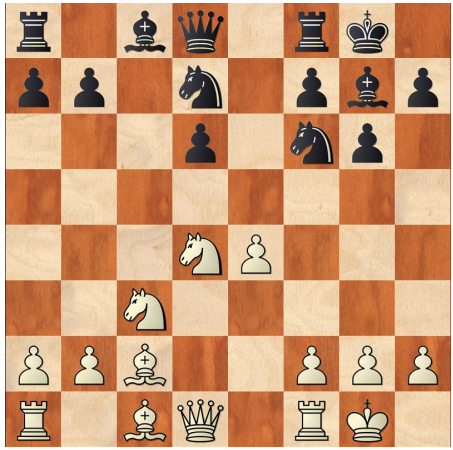
Round 2:

Opponent:
Stanford University:
Board 1: JJ Lang (2110)
Board 2: Alexander Su (1648)
Board 3: Robert Selwyn (1641)
Board 4: Alesanmi Odufisan (1000)

This round proved to already be incredibly tough, as both Su and Selwyn, despite the significantly lower USCF ratings, sported chess.com rapid ratings of over 2100. I myself had my hands full with strong expert Jonathan Lang. Owen once again cruised to victory to bring us a point on board 4, which would turn out to be crucial to sealing the match for us. In the end, Tim lost to Su, but I was able to come out on top vs. Lang, and in the final game, James got a draw to seal us the match, 2.5-1.5. This set the stage for the crucial round 3, our match vs. the top seeds, Free Bribes: Checks for Checkmate (2199).

NM Wan, Joseph (2257) - Lang, Jonathan (2110)
2021 USAT North on Chess.com

1.e4 Going into the game, I knew that Lang would likely either play Sicilian or 1... e5, so I I had mentally prepared myself for both. **1...c5** Sicilian it is! **2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Nd7 4.c3 Ngf6 5.Bd3** I've long messed with a lot of move orders here, and decided to go for the immediate bishop retreat 5. Bd3. Leaving the Queen on her starting square is more flexible, as it allows for the option of putting the Rook on the "e" file. [5.Qe2 I've tried this move before as well. g6 6.0-0 Bg7 7.Rd1 0-0 8.d4= with a balanced game.] **5...g6** Lang decides to go for the fianchetto option. **6.0-0 Bg7 7.Bc2 e5!?** When I saw this move, I was a little confused, as I thought the combination of the fianchetto and the weakening of the "d" pawn couldn't be good. **8.d4 exd4 9.cxd4 0-0 10.Nc3 cxd4 11.Nxd4!?** Perhaps a bit too fast. [In hindsight, 11.Qxd4 might've been better! Nb6 12.Qd1 Be6 13.Nd4 Bc4 14.Re1 when the advance d5? leads to a significantly better position for White after 15.e5 Nfd7 16.f4 Rc8 17.Be3+- with much more space.]



11...d5! Wow! I had completely missed this idea, and simply thought Black was getting saddled with a weak isolated pawn. This imaginative idea temporarily sacrifices a pawn, but as shown in the next couple of moves, there is no way for White to hold the pawn, and Black rids himself of his weakness and frees his pieces. **12.exd5 Nb6** Here I sank in a long think, having missed the thrust of the "d" pawn. Coming up with nothing to get an advantage, I settled for **13.Bg5!?** [13.Bb3 The computer likes this move better. **13… Nbxd5 14.Re1 Nxc3 15.bxc3 Qa5 16.Bd2** I felt rather uncomfortable making this retreat, but it had to be done. **16...Nd5** More pressure, after which I must use tactics to hold my material together. **17.Nb3** [17.c4?? Nc3! 18.Bxc3 Qxc3-+ Too many loose pieces and pawns. Black will win material.] **17...Qc7 18.Rc1** Defending the isolated "c" pawn indirectly. **18...Be6** [18...Nxc3?? 19.Bxc3 Bxc3?? (19...Qxc3 20.Bxg6 Qf6=) 20.Bb1+- The pin on the "c" file is decisive.] **19.Qf3 Nf6 20.Bf4** Now, I'm beginning to get my pieces out and more active- I felt a lot more comfortable here **20...Qc8 21.Be5 Bg4?!** Beginning to go astray. Black seems to be driving the Queen around with tempo, making her assume an awkward post, but this puts his bishop significantly out of play and out of touch with the center. 22**.Qf4 Nh5 23.Qb4!**

After this move, I felt more than satisfied with my position. I have finally unraveled after a tough opening, and the Queen actually sits beautifully on "b4" **23...Bf5?** Perhaps still under the impression that he held an advantage, Lang errs here. While trading off the bishops might seem like a good idea, it fails tactically.

24.Bxf5 Qxf5?? Now Black is completely lost. However this move is understandable as when offering the light squared bishop trade, Black probably intended to recapture with the Queen, missing White's 25th move. [24...gxf5 This was required, although ugly, and White retains a massive advantage.] **25.g4** Forking the Queen and knight. **25...Qg5** At first glance, it seems like this saves Black. By pinning the "g" pawn to the King, White is unable to capture the knight, but only temporarily! **26.h4!** A pretty deflection tactic. White attacks the Queen so Black has no time to react, and must leave the pin of the "g" pawn. **26...Qxh4 27.gxh5** And now White is up a piece. **27...Qg5+ 28.Bg3 f5** Lang fights on, trying to take advantage of the pin on the exposed White King. **29.Qh4!** Practically, a good choice. White forces the queens off the board, making the exposed King not a factor anymore, and the remainder is just a matter of technique. **29...Qxh4 30.Bxh4 Bh6** A good try, trying to seal the White bishop inside a chain of Black pawns. **31.Rcd1 g5 32.Rd6!** However, the pretty counterattack on the Black Bh6 prevents any counterplay and seals the game pretty quickly in White's favor. **32...Bg7 33.Bxg5 Bxc3 34.Re3 Bb4 35.Rd7 Rf7 36.Red3 Raf8 37.Bh6 Re8??** A final blunder in an already lost position. **38.Rg3+** Overall, I was pretty happy with the game. Despite the tough opening, I activated all my pieces and seized the tactical chances that were given to me to finish off the game. This Board 1 encounter was crucial for the TK Covidians to win the overall match and go into round 3 undefeated. **1-0**

Round 2 Result: (TK) Covidians vs. Stanford University, 2.5-1.5

Round 3:

Opponent:
Free Bribes: Checks for Checkmate
Board 1: IM Josiah Stearman (2472)
Board 2: CM David Zhurbinsky (2165)
Board 3: Samuel Zhang (2119)
Board 4: Skyler Tunc (2039)
Average Rating: 2199

I had correctly predicted based on the standings that we would face the top seeds in the third round. This was an unfortunate pairing for both of us, as the second and third seeds got to face significantly lower rated opposition. In order to go into the next day perfect, we had to overcome the top seeds. On paper, it seemed to be a pretty tough task. I was 200+ points outrated vs. my board 1 counterpart, IM Stearman, and Owen was also outrated on board 4. While Tim and James both held

rating advantages over their respective opponents, it wouldn't be easy to beat them.

It was during this round that I played one of the best games of my entire chess playing life to contribute to us winning the match. In a King's Indian French (I was black), the game followed the normal concepts: White attacking on the Kingside, and Black on the Queenside. As you will see below, I made a beautiful temporary pawn sacrifice on move 17 to free up squares for my knights, and kept an iron grip for the rest of the game, eventually winning massive material and forcing resignation. As I finished off the game, I immediately pumped my fists in the air, happy that I had defeated such a strong opponent, and knowing that this would be a key victory in the outcome of the match. However, the win wouldn't be possible if not for results from the other boards.

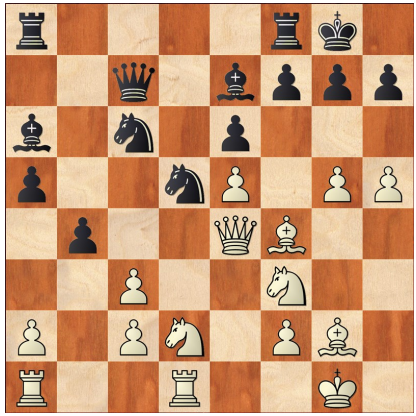
Prior to my victory, Owen had unfortunately lost a promising position against Tunc, so the match score was tied. Tim and James both pressed slightly better endgames, but when Tim drew and James's position looked drawish, I started to lose hope that we would clinch the upset victory. But, James never gives up, and in a rook endgame with opposite colored bishops a pawn up, he squeezed out the victory to send us into the second day of the event with a perfect 3-0. Here's my victory vs. IM Josiah Stearman, and James's clutch victory vs. Expert Samuel Zhang.

IM Stearman, Joseph (2472) - NM Wan, Joseph (2257)
2021 USAT North on Chess.com

1.e4 e6 This round, the power of the French Defense **2.d3 d5 3.Qe2** I had sort of expected this, as I had gone over some of Josiah's games a tiny bit prior to the round. **3...Nf6 4.Nf3 c5 5.e5 Nfd7 6.g3 Nc6 7.Bg2 Be7 8.h4 b5** A common idea for Black to respond to White's building pressure on the Kingside- seeking counterplay on the opposite wing. **9.0-0 0-0 10.Bf4 a5 11.Nbd2 Ba6!?** An idea that I remembered from my game back in the 2017 World Open vs. NM Arthur Macaspac, in which I emerged victorious. While the bishop doesn't seem to be doing much right now, it bears down the unopened diagonal, which at the end holds White's Queen and rook. **12.h5 Nb6** White continues his Kingside attack, while Black shifts his pieces to the Queenside to begin the counterattack. **13.g4 b4** Opening up the diagonal for the Ba6, now White may have to be careful about tactics there. **14.Rfd1 c4** Further cracking open the position, trying to open up the Queenside before White gets

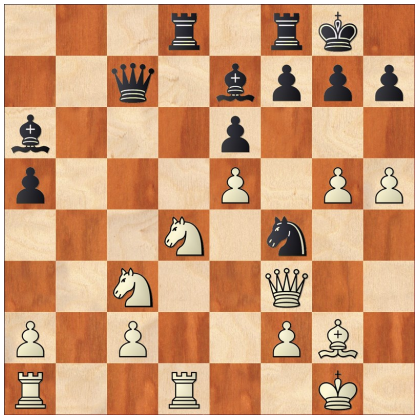
anything substantial going on the Kingside. White cannot push the "d" pawn due to the incoming discovered attack, so he must make a decision about allowing me to open the "c" file, or capturing the nuisance of a pawn. **15.dxc4** Josiah chooses to capture, perhaps anticipating 15... Nxc4, when the game is pretty balanced, and White is in no immediate danger. However, I had prepared a nice intermezzo move. **15...Qc7!?** I think most people would be inclined to immediate recapture the pawn. However, I wanted to recapture on "c4" with my "d" pawn, and immediately doing so allows White discovered attacks along the "d" file, which might be unpleasant. So I spend a move getting my Queen out of the way, as the "c4" pawn is pinned and isn't going anywhere. **16.g5?** This move doesn't accomplish much, and instead makes White's dark-squared bishop look like a pawn, on top of further weakening some squares on the Kingside. **16...dxc4!** Carrying through the intended plan **17.Qe4** Virtually forced, as the discovered attack was not very easy to deal with. **17...c3!** Playing the pawn thrust anyway. However, it is the next move that deals the most damage. **18.bxc3** Now, once again, Black has to recapture, right...?

18...Nd5!!



Not so! The strong centralization of Black's knight claims Black a huge edge. The knight will likely land on "c3" with strong effect, and with attacks on the Rd1 and the "e2" square, will win material. **19.cxb4? Nc3!-+** Who cares about the pawns!? Make threats first! **20.Qe3** Now I'm faced with the option of capturing the rook or continuing my attack and keeping my strong knight. Originally, I had intended to just lop off the rook and enjoy my material advantage, and although this would be winning, I found an even stronger move. **20...Nxb4!** White's problems are now compounded! Black recovers a pawn, and threatens both 21... Nxc2, forking yet another rook, or 21... Nbd5, forking the Queen and bishop. **21.Nd4** Josiah fights tough. He unleashes his light squared bishop along the long diagonal, piercing my rook in the corner. **21...Rad8** No rush to collect any material! The material

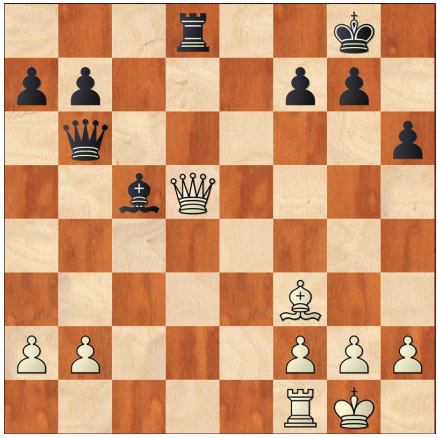
is not running! This move gets the rook out of danger and adds to the threats by threatening 22... Rxd4 and 23... Ne2+. **22.Ne4** White decides to cut his losses and try and activate his pieces. **22...Nbd5?!** A small blemish on what was otherwise a perfect game. [I had seen 22...Nxd1! 23.Rxd1 Nxc2! 24.Qc1 but missed the cunning move Ba3! , which instantly wins the game for Black. 25.Qxc2 Qxc2 26.Nxc2 Rxd1+-+] **23.Qf3?** Placing the Queen on a really unfortunate square. The idea was right, but White had to go one more square to stay alive. **23...Nxf4 24.Nxc3 Nxg2!**



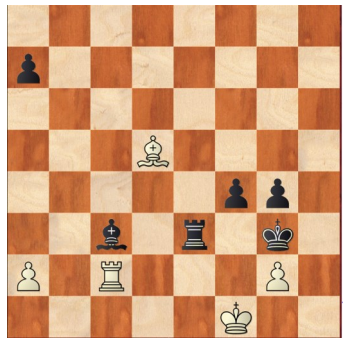
Simplest. White's knight's will be caught in the middle of the center. **25.Kxg2 Bb7** If White had played 23. Qg3, this would not be a pin! **26.Ne4 Qxe5** A beautiful fork of the White knights. **27.Nf6+ Bxf6 28.Qxb7 Qxg5+** Josiah resigned, as I will collect the Nd4 on the next move, and my attack will continue with devastating effect. One of the most beautiful games I have played for sure, I really enjoyed playing 18... Nd5!! for sure! After this upset, it was up to Tim and James to seal the match victory! **0-1**

Zhang, Samuel (2118) - NM Neal, James (2174)
2021 USAT North on Chess.com
(Annotated by James Neal)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Bd3 Nxe4 7.Bxe4 Nf6 8.Bg5!? h6 I did not get to play the first round due to our opponent's incomplete team. The second round was a tense game against a lower rated that ended in a draw. My thoughts going into this game was to play what I put the most hours into and here we are at the Rubinstein French. **9.Bxf6 Qxf6 10.0-0 Bd6** I was relieved at this point because he avoided playing any of the challenging lines. I had the bishop pair and did not fear for the safety of my king. **11.Re1 0-0 12.c3 c5 13.Qb3 cxd4 14.cxd4 Rd8** I had plans of bringing my bishop around to g7 and targeting the d-pawn. **15.Rad1 Rb8 16.Ne5 Bd7 17.Nxd7 Rxd7=** At this point I felt the game was even. I removed my bad bishop and have my opponent stuck with an isolated d-pawn. **18.d5 Bc5 19.Bf3 exd5 20.Rxd5 Rxd5 21.Qxd5 Qb6 22.Rf1 Rd8!=**



This wasn't a difficult move to find but I had put a lot of time into this move based on the threat on f2. I thought all these tempo gains and concessions had added up to an advantage for me; I did not want to spoil it with imprecision. **23.Qxb7 Bxf2+ 24.Kh1 Qxb7 25.Bxb7 Rd2 26.Be4 g6** [26...Rxb2? 27.Rb1 I saw my opponent was baiting the capture since the removal of the rooks would give him the best chance to draw the game.] **27.h3 Rxb2** From this point, I knew I had a sizeable advantage. I realize that patience would be enough to provoke errors from this point on. **28.Bd5 Kg7 29.Rd1 Bg3 30.Bb3 f5 31.Kg1 Kf6 32.Rd3 f4 33.Kf1 Rf2+ 34.Kg1 Re2 35.Rd1 g5** [35...Kg5! I considered running my king to g3 but overestimated my opponent's counterplay.] **36.Kf1 Rf2+ 37.Kg1 Rb2 38.Kf1 h5 39.Rc1**
[39.Rd6+! Kf5 40.Rd5+ Ke4 41.Rxg5 Rf2+ 42.Kg1 Re2 43.Bc4 Rc2 44.Bb5 Rxa2 45.Bc6+]
39...g4 40.hxg4 hxg4 41.Rd1 [41.Bd1 Kg5 42.Rc5+ Kh4 43.Rc2 Rb1-+] **41...Bf2 42.Rc1 Be3 43.Rc2 Rb1+ 44.Ke2 Rg1 45.Bd5 Kg5 46.Rb2 Kh4 47.Be4 Kg3 48.Rb3 Rc1** [48...Rxg2+! This was the critical point that I was aiming for but I avoided due to my time situation. I was pretty sure this would be winning but somehow my mind tricked me into thinking there might be someway for him to stop my promotion. My reasoning was I can always come back to this position and play the sacrifice if my alternatives don't lead to something. 49.Bxg2 Kxg2 50.Rb2 Bb6 51.Kd3+ Kf3-+ And the g-pawn will promote...] **49.Rb2 Rc4 50.Bd5 Rd4 51.Bb7 Ra4 52.Bc6 Ra3 53.Bd5 Kh2 54.Rc2 Bd4 55.Rd2 Re3+ 56.Kf1 Bc3 57.Rc2 Kg3-+**



It was at this point that I realized my opponent would either have to sacrifice the bishop on f3 or watch his king get checkmated on e1. **58.Rc1 f3 59.gxf3 gxf3 60.Rd1 f2 0-1**

Round 4:

Opponent:
a happy jubilant pawn
Board 1: FM Jennifer Yu (2411)
Board 2: FM Dachey Lin (2340)
Board 3: FM Guannan (Terry) Song (2274)
Board 4: Maggie Luo (1705)
Average Rating: 2183

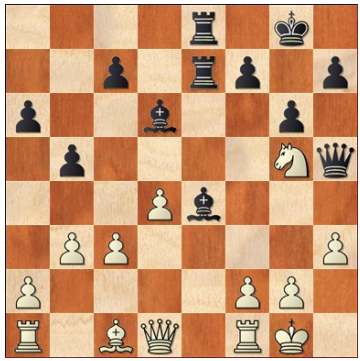
Two teams remained unscathed at the end of the first day. Us, and the third seeds. Led by 2019 US Women's Champion FM Jennifer Yu, this team was going to be another tough one to get past, outrating us on three of four boards. It was Owen who opened the lead for us, defeating Maggie Luo on the Black side of a Marshall in handy fashion. James lost in time trouble vs. Song, and Tim held a very solid draw vs. Lin.

My own game vs. Jennifer was not very interesting. It was a rather boring Italian Game where I tried for chances, but she defended very well and gained an advantage. However, as the clocks dwindled down, she was unable to find any substantial breakthrough and we agreed to a draw in a position that was far from over, but neither of us wanted to throw the match. A draw with the third seeds was a good result for us, as it meant likely that the next round we would play down, while Jennifer's team would have to contend with second seeds "The Dartmouth Keggies (2186)", led by IM Michael Bodek, who also now had 3.5/4. Here is Owen's game vs. Maggie Luo, a critical victory that kept us in the title hunt.

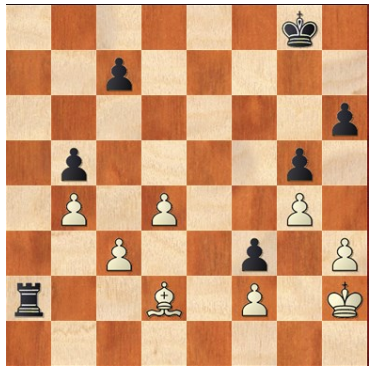
Luo, Maggie (1705) - Fiedorowicz, Owen (1989)
2021 USAT North on Chess.com
(Annotated by Owen Fiedorowicz)

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.Qe2 This was a move I hadn't seen before, so I decided to keep playing what felt normal and hoped it transposed. **5...b5 6.Bb3 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.c3** Now here if the rook was on e1, and the queen on d1, d5 would be a mainline Marshall Attack, so I decided to go for d5, since I didn't see anything too **different in the current position. 8...d5 9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Nxe5 Nxe5 11.Qxe5 Bb7** [11...c6 This was the other move I was considering, I think both are fine] **12.d4** Takes control of the center and prepares to activate the bishop. **12...Bd6** Threatens the queen and pressures h2. **13.Qf5 g6** Trying to kick the queen off my knight. [13...Qh4 14.g3 and I have to trade queens in order to not lose a piece.] **14.Qd3 Qh4** To activate the queen and attack h2. **15.h3** Stops the threat. **15...Rae8** Activating my rook along the e file. **16.Bxd5** I was threatening Nf4, which would gain the bishop pair anyway, and weaken his light squares. **16...Bxd5 17.Nd2** Stops my Bc4 threat and

activates the knight. **17...Re7** To double my rooks on the e file and play Re1. **18.Nf3** Attacks my queen and activates the knight. **18...Qh5 19.b3** Stopping Bc4. **19...Be4** Forces the queen to d1 or e2 where it isn't as active. **20.Qd1 Rfe8** Activates my other rook. **21.Ng5?** Here I have a tactic.



21...Qxd1 22.Rxd1 Bc2 Since I have back rank threats, White has to give up the rook to avoid checkmate. **23.Rf1 Bd3 24.Be3 Bxf1** And I win an exchange. **25.Kxf1 Rc8** Preps c5. **26.b4** Stops my c5 threat. **26...Rce8** Putting my rook back on a useful file, I was preparing ideas of Rxe3, and then winning c3 to be up a pawn and a bishop for a knight instead of a rook for a knight and a pawn. **27.a4 f5** I was trying to play f4 with this move so I could bring my rook to e2. [27...Rxe3 28.fxe3 Rxe3 29.axb5 axb5 30.Ra5 During the game I thought she gets a pawn too, but looking back this would be fine for me. c6 31.Ra6 Rxc3] **28.g3** This was a mistake for her, I could just take the g3 pawn, I missed that though. **28...Rf8** Adding more support to f4. **29.axb5 axb5 30.Bd2 f4 31.g4 f3** With f3 I tie down the king and threaten to trap the knight. **32.Re1 Rxe1+** I trade the rooks off to weaken the back rank. **33.Bxe1 h6** Kicking the knight away from my f3 pawn. **34.Ne4 Bf4** Stopping the knight from going to d2 and threatening f3, I want pressure off f3 so my rook can go to a8 then a1. **35.Nd2 Bxd2** To stop the knight from pressuring f3. **36.Bxd2 Ra8** Activates rook and threatens mate. **37.Kg1 g5** Defending h6. **38.Kh2 Ra2** threatening d2 and f2, she can't defend f2 c3 and her bishop.



39.Be3 Rc2 40.Kg3 Rxc3 41.Kxf3 Rc4 42.Ke4 Rxb4 and I have a passed b pawn and am up an exchange, the game finished like this: **43.Kd3 Rc4 44.f4 gxf4 45.Bxf4 Kg7 46.h4 Kh7 47.g5 c5 48.Be3 cxd4 49.Bxd4 h5 50.Bf2 Kg6 51.Be1 Kf5 52.Bg3 Ke6 53.Be1 Kd5 54.Bf2 b4 55.Be1 b3 56.Bc3 Rxh4 57.g6 Rg4 58.g7 h4 0-1**

Round 4 Result: (TK) Covidians vs. a happy jubilant pawn, 2-2

Round 5:

Opponent:
Quaranteam
Board 1: Shawnak Shivakumar (2153)
Board 2: CM Nitish Nathan (1941)
Board 3: Vishva Nanugonda (1846)
Board 4: Pranav Sathish (1768)
Average Rating: 1927

It's very rare that you get to have such a blowout performance this late into the tournament, but that's exactly what we did this round. I personally had a very lackluster performance, the only big thing that I was displeased about this whole tournament regards to my own play. I messed up a move order in the opening vs. Shivakumar, and the computer gave +2 for White by move twelve, when my draw offer was accepted. I had checked my teammates' games and saw they were in good position to have positive results, and given my position, I was more than happy with a quick draw. In the end, my opponents all came through, blowing through their respective board opponents for a very quick 3.5-0.5 victory, setting the stage for a shot at the title in the final round.

Round 5 Result: Quaranteam vs. (TK) Covidians, 0.5-3.5

Now we had all eyes on the top board matchup, where FM Jennifer Yu's team, "a happy jubilant pawn", were up against IM Michael Bodek's team, "The Dartmouth Keggies", as mentioned above. It was basically a given that we would be facing the "Keggies" in the final round, but the result of this match would determine if we controlled our own fates. It was also a given that in the final round, the top seeds, led by IM Josiah Stearman, whom we had vanquished in round 3, would be facing Jennifer's team in the final round. If the Keggies won this match, it would mean that both us and them have 4.5/5 going into the final round, and our result would determine the champion. If they drew, then we would be sole leaders going into the last round but needing a win to guarantee victory, as our tiebreaks were pretty abysmal.
As it happened, Jennifer's team won the match 2.5-1.5, leaving the "Keggies" with 3.5/5, out of title contention, but a chance to play spoiler vs. us, while "a happy jubilant pawn" would tackle top seeds "Free Bribes: Checks for Checkmate."

Round 6:

Matchups:
Free Bribes: Checks for Checkmate (2199, 4.0) vs. a happy jubilant pawn (2183, 4.5)

Opponent:
The Dartmouth Keggies
Board 1: IM Michael Bodek (2487)
Board 2: Michael Takahashi (2134)
Board 3: David Hauge (2118)
Board 4: Hyung Ju Nam (2006)

So we went into the final round with a shot at the 2021 USAT North Championship as well as national playoffs. On paper it was quite similar to our round 3 matchup, so I was confident we had the capabilities to pull this one off as well. Unfortunately, fate did not have things lined up our way, and the Thunder King Covidian train ran out of steam. The opening phases for boards 2-4 went fine, but as the games wore on, I realized we were not going to win this match. Sadly, one by one we dropped those boards, and I was left fighting Bodek in a game that would just be for individual pride.

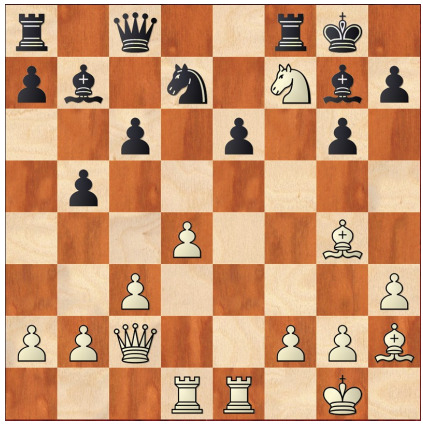
I held a promising position and winning endgame, but as my clock began to run low, so did my calculation. I gave the IM a chance and he pounced, drawing the game, officially handing my team our only loss of the event. Here is my game vs. Bodek in the final round.

NM Wan, Joseph (2257) - IM Bodek, Michael (2487)
2021 USAT North on Chess.com

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c6 I had never faced Bodek before, so I didn't really know what to expect opening-wise coming into this game. I saw that Bodek had played this exact move order vs. IM David Brodsky not too long ago, so I prepared a tiny bit prior to the game. **4.Nf3 d5 5.h3** This was the engine recommendation, preventing the annoying pin 5... Bg4, and keeping the tension in the center. It's not quite obvious how Black should develop. **5...Nh6?!** But I don't think this is the way. Usually I've seen this move come after White has already committed to pushing a pawn to "e5", but playing 5... Nh6 so early doesn't look good. **6.Be2** Now White gets to keep strong central control and gets comfortable development. **6...0-0 7.0-0 dxe4 8.Nxe4 Nf5 9.c3 Nd7 10.Bf4 Nb6 11.Re1 Nd5 12.Bh2 b6 13.Qa4 Bb7 14.Rad1 Qc8 15.Ne5 Nd6 16.Bf3**

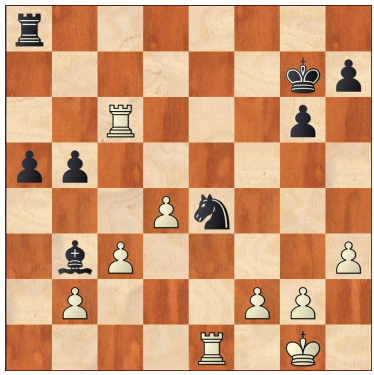
The opening phase has more or less come and gone, Black is very

passive right now, while White has strong centralized knights and unblocked bishops. However, it's hard to find a breakthrough here, and Black might exchange pieces and break out of his cramped position. passive right now, while White has strong centralized knights and unblocked bishops. However, it's hard to find a breakthrough here, and Black might exchange pieces and break out of his cramped position. **16... b5** This move didn't look right to me during the game, as it weakens the "c5" square and makes his bishop on "b7" look even worse than it already is. But then again, it's already hard to find a move for Black. **17.Qc2 Nxe4 18.Bxe4 Nf6 19.Bf3 Nd7** I think Bodek had planned this whole maneuvering of his knights, to try and get rid of my own active knights, but that he overlooked a devilish plan that lurks in the position. **20.Bg4** First, pinning the Nd7 to the Queen, inticing **20...e6** ... and now **21.Nxf7!**



A thematic sacrifice, which as mentioned above, I suspect Bodek missed, as he moved fairly fast starting with 16... b5, up until this point, where he took a bit of a think before capturing my knight. White cracks open the position of the Black King, instantly wins two pawns for the piece, and will end up in an endgame with rook and two pawns for two minor pieces. **21...Rxf7** The only move. [21...Kxf7?? Boy, Black is asking for it with this one. 22.Bxe6+ Kf6 23.Qe4+- and it would take a miracle for the Black monarch to survive this one.] **22.Bxe6 Qf8 23.Qb3** Threatening the Black Nd7 and planning to ensure at least one rook to the seventh rank in the upcoming endgame. **23...Nf6 24.Bxf7+ Qxf7 25.Re7!** Taking advantage of the pin along the "a2-g8" diagonal. Trading Queens first would allow Black to activate his King and take away the option of Re7. **25...Qxb3 26.axb3 Bc8** Now I had a gut feeling this ending was winning, but I have a lot of options here, and I wasn't sure which one was the right path to take. **27.Rc7?!** I chose to eliminate the Black "c" pawn to create a central passer, but there were stronger ways to continue. **27...Be6!** Black must counterattack and activate his pieces. **28.Rxc6 Bxb3 29.Ra1 a5!** A move which I had hoped Bodek wouldn't find. **30.Be5 Ne4?!** White's task becomes a bit easier

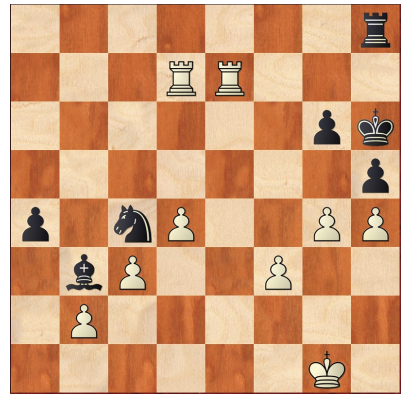
after this one. It was key to keep the knight on a good central square where it can't be kicked easily. **31.Bxg7 Kxg7 32.Re1!** The point. Now White reactivates his rook along the "e" file, where Black's knight is vulnerable to attack, and can also be kicked with pawn to f3 to force the barricade to move.



32...Ng5? Blundering a basic fork. **33.Rc5+- Nf7 34.Rxb5 a4 35.Rb7** Black's pieces are once again very passive, and White will double his rooks on the seventh with lots and lots of pressure. **35...h5 36.f3 Kh6 37.Ree7 Nd6 38.Rbd7 Nc4 39.h4** I sensed a mating net developing, and I hurried to execute my plan with the time dwindling down. **39...Rh8 40.g4?**

(diagram—top of next page)

And in my haste, I give Black a chance to escape. It will be later apparent why 40. Kh2! was a much more accurate move. [40.Kh2!! Bd1 41.Kh3+- intending 42. g4



with devastating effect.] **40...hxg4 41.fxg4 Bd1!** The move I had missed. I have no time to bring my King in to support for the checkmate, as Black is immediately threatening to lop off my pawn on "g4". In the time trouble, I make one final error that steers the game towards a draw. **42.Ra7?** [42.g5+! Kh5 43.Rh7+ Rxh7 44.Rxh7+ Kg4 45.h5!! Kxg5 46.h6!+- was what I had missed. With 46. h6, White creates a dangerous passed pawn and will likely win at least one of Black's two minor pieces for it.] **42...Bxg4 43.Rxa4 Nxb2 44.Ra5 Bf5 45.Kg2 Nc4** We agreed to a draw here, as Black can never win, and White's winning chances are mostly if not all gone. Overall, a really solid game from myself against a super strong opponent, it's a shame I couldn't pull it off this time, but given the team situation, there was really no difference between a win or a draw here. **1/2—1/2**

Round 6: The Dartmouth Keggies vs. (TK) Covidians, 3.5-0.5

Summary

The Thunder King Covidians ended up on 4.5/6, tied for second but ended up taking third on tiebreaks. Congratulations to FMs Jennifer Yu, Dachey Lin, and Guannan Song, and Maggie Luo for their hard-fought victory of the event (they triumphed in the final round as well).

Overall, although the online experience was not what everyone had hoped for, it was still magnificent to play the USAT North and keep my own tradition now to six years and running. I would like to thank my teammates NM Tim McEntee, NM James Neal, and Owen Fiedorowicz for just being amazing teammates, never losing heart and always fighting to the very end. To get so close to grasping the crown with a team fully from Iowa, a state not particularly known for its chess playing skills, was more than I could've asked for and I had a lot of fun playing in the event. Special thanks also goes out to chess.com for hosting the event, as well as TDs Glenn Panner, Judit Sztaray, and Maret Thorpe for making the event happen. I look forward to coming back next year to exact my revenge, hopefully in person! :)

Girls in the Chess World

By: Anjali Lodh

"The difference between the sexes is remarkable in chess, but not any more so, to my mind, than in any other field of cultural activity. Women cannot play chess, but they cannot paint either, or write, or philosophize. In fact, women have never thought or made anything worth considering." - Jan Hein Donner, (Dutch GM)

A lot has changed since the 1950s, but unfortunately, some of these horrible things still ring true in the chess world today. While men and women are undoubtedly very different in terms of brain function, I firmly believe that it has a minuscule impact on their respective chess-playing abilities. Societal problems and psychological factors are certainly more to blame for the vast majority of the differences in performance between the genders. The reality is: A woman has a far steeper and rockier hill to climb, so many just don't bother to climb it at all. The few that do have so many hurdles to overcome just to survive in the chess world. Many experience discrimination, sexual harassment, and just don't have a lot of support or encouragement from people overall.

While I was lucky to be fostered into a welcoming and open-minded chess community and received minimal discouragement, I have at times felt my confidence falter and had my abilities questioned. While I am beyond grateful to not have received harsh backlash for my involvement in the chess community, many others suffer different fates. I couldn't bear to think of a young girl walking away from chess not due to her abilities, but due to misogyny and standards set by society. I remember the first time that I stepped into the All-Girls National playing hall in 2018. I cannot tell you how refreshing it is after five years of playing chess to finally walk into a room and see people that look just like you. I had a similar experience in June of the same year and the following year when I participated in the Susan Polgar SPICE Girls chess camp.

Anjali at the 2018 SPICE chess camp with Susan Polgar

I not only learned and played chess with people just like me, but I made lifelong friends. I desperately wanted to share this sensation with others alike, because chess is not reserved for men. That's why in early 2019, I partnered with my good friends Isabel Fiedorowicz and Athena Wu and started a non-profit chess club dedicated to helping and encouraging young girls to play chess.

Anjali, Isabel, and Athena at the All-Girls National tournament in 2019

Chess Butterflies' mission is to inspire girls to be confident chess players. Because the sport is so male-dominated, there is a lack of representation for young girls to look up to. We strive to create an environment where girls can feel comfortable and proud to be a part of the chess community. We aspire to not only teach the girls important chess skills but to also foster unbreakable bonds between the girls. We focus on making the club fun and engaging while also making sure they gain experience and

grow as chess players. Our best turnouts for the club were around 25 girls which we would split up into 3 groups. These groups would rotate into different stations: Group instruction, tactics, and arts and crafts. Each group had a name respective to their skill level: caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly. This showed that no one person is superior to another in terms of chess, they are all just at different stages in their chess life. It represented that they all started at separate points, but would eventually go down the same path and spread their wings to become independent in the chess world.

Isabel, Anjali, and Athena teaching the club

For the group instruction one of the coaches would teach our prepared lesson plan to a group and give a review worksheet at the end of the session. For tactics, they would solve puzzles from a printed packet and we would provide assistance if necessary. These girls are in elementary school, so we thought it would be appropriate to let them have a break at the craft station where they could focus more on connecting with each other. In addition to that we have a system where the girls can be rewarded with "butterfly bucks" and choose to spend them on an assortment of prizes ranging from stickers to small stuffed animals. Every second I spent teaching the girls I felt a rewarding sense of satisfaction because I knew that what we were doing as a team helped build confidence in the hearts of many young chess players.

The butterfly bucks used in the program

With the school year coming to a close we decided to take a break from the club for the summer so we could regroup and figure out more ways to make the club better for the next year. It took us much longer than expected to plan due to school becoming more and more

overwhelming. By the time we were finally starting to get things moving again, the pandemic was already starting to settle in.

As happy as I was that excited girls were coming up to me and asking when the club was going to resume, I was extremely sad because I knew it was going to take a while and I worried that some of them would lose interest. As the vaccines are getting distributed and quarantine is coming to a close, I am elated to start rebuilding our club to make it even better for 2021. Unfortunately one of our coaches, Isabel, moved to Canada over the summer so we need to take some time to figure out what would be best for the club moving forward. We are hoping to get the club up and running again in September and we have some great ideas on how to get it off the ground. We plan to have numerous fundraising events and team meetings in the summer so we can provide the girls with all the supplies and resources they could possibly need. One of our overall goals is to organize a trip for our members to play as a team in the All-Girls National tournament in 2022.

I just want to pay it forward and give younger generations of chess players that same refreshing feeling that I felt as I walked into that playing hall for the first time.

As quarantine settled in, a lot of us have found a massive amount of free time on our hands. Many discovered chess because of things like the Queen's Gambit series on Netflix. Chess.com has seen soaring numbers like never before and chess sets are being bought rapidly. With more and more new faces in the chess community everyday, we must decide as to whom we want to be seen as in the eyes of newcomers. Do we want the world to see us as a community that revolves entirely around the male gender or a welcoming community dedicated to spreading the love of chess to the world? We must take affirmative action to make our community open to people from all walks of life. Chess is not something that was meant to be hidden, it was meant to be shared. Why should we be mad if someone wants to play chess, no matter who they are? This is the perfect chance for us to give more opportunities similar to Chess Butterflies to women; we must strike while the iron is hot. We need to take great strides in order to close the large gender gap in chess. So let's face it: The chess world is now changing rapidly. We must make it for the better.

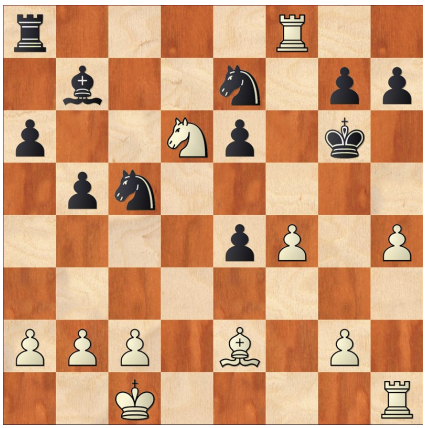
"If we talk about pure abilities and skills, I believe there should be no reason why women cannot play as well as men." - Susan Polgar

Puzzles

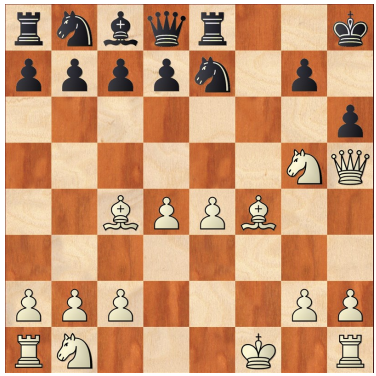
"Chess is 99% Tactics"

Below are 10 problems. How you should approach these problems are similar to games. Evaluate the position, then make your candidates moves. When you are satisfied with your answer, write down your answers. When you are done, compare it to the solutions at the back of this issue.

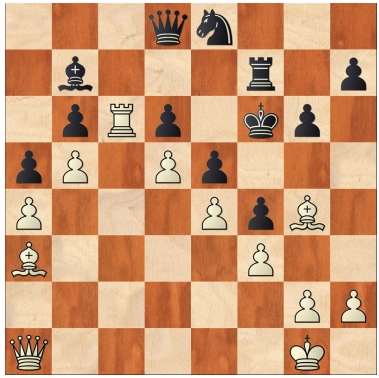
Problems 1-3 are "Easy".
Problems 4-6 are "Medium".
Problems 7-9 are Hard".
Problem 10 is "Very Hard".



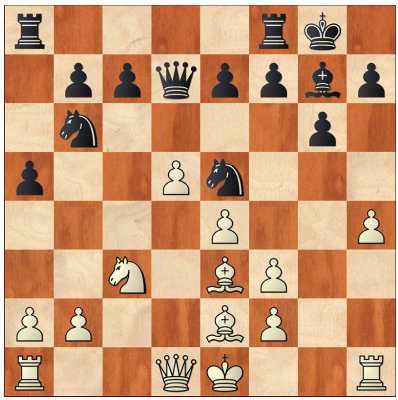
1. White to Move



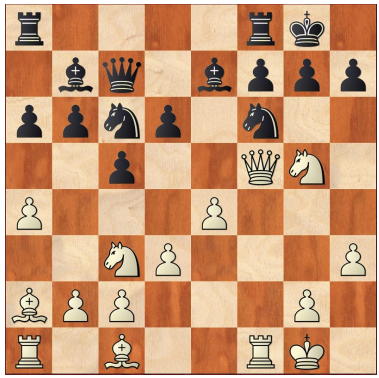
2. White to Move



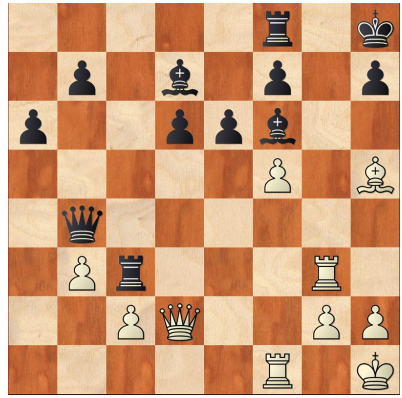
3. White to Move



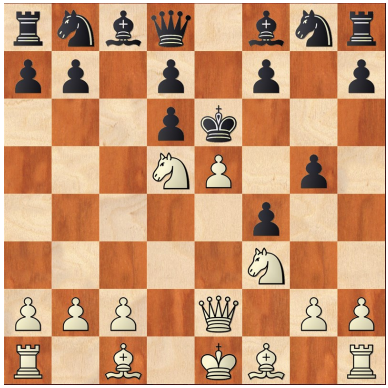
4. White to Move



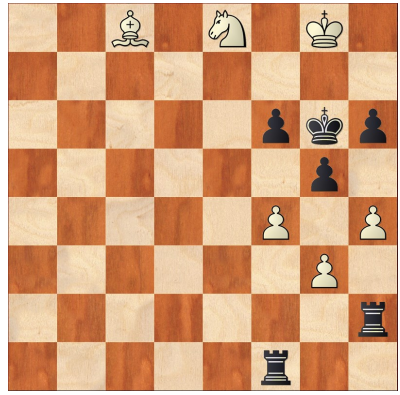
5. White to Move



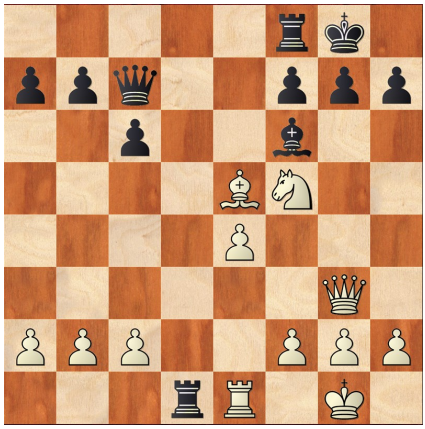
8. White to Move



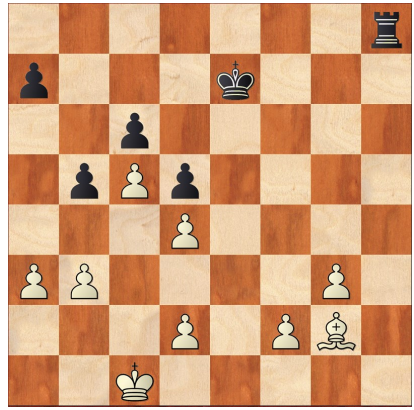
6. White to Move



9. White to Move



7. White to Move



10. White to Move

Quad City Chess Update

By Luis Peralta

The pandemic caused by the virus Covid-19 affected chess all around the world. It affected the local clubs Leathernecks and Illowa that met on Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively. Leathernecks met at Western Illinois University in Moline on Tuesday evening from 6 to 8 pm. Two different groups of players attended: students from the local schools and adult players from the area and those who also played on Wednesday. In the other side of the Mississippi River in Davenport, Illowa chess club has met for more than 25 years. Although both clubs stopped meeting on person in the middle of 2020 due to the pandemic, Illowa members have continued to play through lichess; which is an online site where chess players are still playing from their homes.

Abhyudaya "Bala" Shukla become the 2020 Covid-19 Club champion by winning the classic round robin tournament on January, in which the six best players of the standing charts along the year participated. While we saw new members connecting to play, and some other members returning to play chess. We also we said good bye to one of our members; Joe Willet suddenly passed away at the age of 58 years old. Joe was an enthusiastic chess player who also was a referee and helped to organize activities in both clubs. Joe played an important role during the chess clinic given by GM Vladimir Georgiev two years ago. Besides chess, Joe also enjoyed fishing with his family and friends.

The series of chess events that both clubs had organized during the last three years had to stop too. The Cinco de Mayo, July Classic and the Quad Cities Chess Open were open tournaments with two sections that had been celebrated every year. Also, the scholastic events celebrated on April and November were also canceled. However, state authorities in both states are more flexible regarding safety health measures, and we might begin to meet in person again at Western Illinois University in the month of May. It can be the beginning of a new chess age in the Quad Cities after the catastrophic pandemic.

Joseph Pregon Collection

By Joseph Pregon

All Iowan Matchup

Zapateado (2243) vs Chesrookie (2245)
All Access Chess, chess.com

This is a game taken from Jim F's online All Access Chess tournaments where players, especially from Iowa, have been competing for a little prize money each night. This is against the very strong Iowa player David Bernat who many of you probably know. He is about 1900 or so USCF, so a better classical player than me right now. This was a must-win game for me for the tournament. He had 2.5 points, and I had 2. What happened next was a great display of my positional awareness and attacking abilities.

The game went as follows: **1. b3 c6 2. Bb2 d5 3. e3 Nd7 4. f4 N8f6** White is showing here that he wants to play this game with a firm grip on the e5 square. **5. Nf3 e6 6. d4 Bd6** White has achieved exactly what he wanted so far and black has to wait to see what he will do. **7. Nbd2 Ne4** This is a strange looking move by me, but the idea is—if a trade happens, I get to play f5 and then g6 with a strong bind near the center. This would prevent an attack by black on the kingside more or less at the cost of a slightly inferior structure. **8. Nxe4 xe4 9. Nd2 f5 10. Qh5+ g6 11. Qh6 Bf8 12. Qh3 Bg7** I take advantage of being able to attack the queen with tempo to get the kingside structure that I dreamed of. Meanwhile, this Qh3 idea that he played is a total mystery to me. **13.0-0-0 b5** The engine says b5 is an inaccuracy but sometimes the engine doesn't know what it is talking about. **14. Ba3 a5 15. Bd6? Kf7!** This is the best move actually which I find pretty funny. **16. c4? Qb6** c4 is just a bad strategic move for white. Moving pawns in front of the king and committing them as weaknesses here is the losing plan as we will see. **17. c5 Qd8** c5 is the best move under circumstances. **18. g4?! Nf6 19. g5 Nd5** The kingside is closed, my knight can't be removed by pawns, life is good now. **20. Bg2?? a4!!** The bishop bites granite on g2, while my king prevents him from closing the queenside. It is about to get ripped open while his queen can only watch on h3. **21. Kb2?? Qa5** The evaluation is now -14.6. **22. Nb1 axb3 23. a3 b4!!** I insist on crashing through, the knight can't defend everything, and this is just ggs. **24. Kxb3 Qa4+ 25. Kb2 bxa3+ 26. Ka1 Qb3** White has one piece defending his lonely

king, I have many that are about to become attackers. **27. Rd2 Ba6!** The best move and a great resource to find in a blitz game. FM Alex Betaneli would approve since I am taking all my pieces to the party. **28. Bf1 Nxe3** It is far too late for white now to try such things. **29. Bxa6 Rxa6 30. Qb3?? Nc2+ 31. Rxc2 Qxc2 32. Qc3 Qb2+** He had 1 second left against my 2 min 30 seconds, so I didn't need to be precise anymore. His pawn on d4 I knew was falling anyway, I had a passed pawn on e4 from earlier, and I had a rook for his bad knight on b1, so strategically this was completely winning anyway. It was a nice game though that demonstrated how to defend your king with pawns and attack with pawns on the opponent's side. **0-1**

The Botez Gambit starring Andrea Botez

Chesrookie930 (2316) vs Mobamba604 (2248)
Streamed 1|0 game, chess.com

Most of us know the chess streamer Andrea Botez and her sister Alexandra, and how their bullet ratings for both of them are the highest among all their time controls. I had always wanted to play one of them on stream, and I got my chance. I was playing games one night and was entering paired with, to my surprise, Andrea.

1. c4 Nf6 2. Nc3 g6 3. d4 Bg7 I go for an English because why not? Meanwhile, she does her own thing in a king's Indian type setup. **4. e3 0-0 5. Nf3 d6 6. Be2 Nc6** I try not to overextend my space early because I'm aware that she has probably studied the lines. **7. 0 -0 e5 8. d5 Ne7 9. e4 a5** Black will attack on the kingside while I want the queenside, **10. Bd3 Nd7 11. h3 Nc5 12. Bc2 f5 13. Re1 fxe4 14. Nxe4 Nxe4** I don't know why she felt the need to exchange everything. This only helps white. **15. Bxe4 Bf5 16. Qc2 Bxe4 17. Qxe4 Nf5** 18**. Ng5 Qe7?** This just gives me the juicy e6 outpost. **19. Ne6 Rf7 20. Be2 c6 21. Rf1 cxd5 22. cxd5 Nd4 23. Bc3? Nxe6 24. dxe6 Qxe6 25. Rad1 Rd8 26. Rd5 Rf5 27. Qd3 e4 28. Qd2 Bxc3 29. bxc3 Rf6= 30. c4 Rdf8 31. Qd4 e3 32. f3 e2 33. Re1 Rf5 34. Qd2 Rxc4 35. Rxe2 Rc1+ 36. Kh2 Qc8 37. Rxd6 Qc7+- 38. Re6 Rc7 39. Qd4 Rc7?? 40. Re8+ Kg7 41. Qe5+ Rf6 42. Re7+ Kh6 43. Rxc7 Rxd6 44. Qxd6 Rxc7 45. Qxc7 Kg5 46. Qg3+ Kf6 47. Qc7 h5 48. Qb6+ Kg5 49. Qxb7 Kh6 50. Qa7 a5 51. Qa6 a3 52. Qa5 h4 53. Qxa3 Kh5 54. Qa6 g5 55. Qa5** She flagged. Bullet is a fun intuition based time control in my opinion. I also have plans to return to over the board play very soon and see if I am now stronger than 1781 USCF. **1-0**

The Pregon Immortal Game

Chesrookie930 (2022) vs Pineapplepro123 (2090) 3|2, chess.com

This guy's username at the time this game was played was Pineapplepro123. It was played in the summer of 2020 at a USCF rated online blitz tournament. This is still one of my favorite games that has stood the test of time and it really shows my creativity of the game in a beautiful miniature.

The game starts with **1.e4 c5**. I go for something different then what I usually play. **2. Nc3 d6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Bc4 e6.** Black is making a lot of pawn moves already that don't contribute to his piece development, so I open up the game. **5. d4 cxd4 6. Nxd4 Nc6 7. Be3 a6.** White has more central advancement and four pieces developed, black has only two, so I complete development. **8. 0-0 Be7** For human chess, this is a really slow try for black that just wasn't aggressive enough, so I plot an attack. **9. Kh1!** The best move, and approved by Tal. **9… h6.** Black is getting very desperate now. 10**. f4! Nxd4 11. Bxd4 b5**. Black is gonna regret exchanging knights at the cost of giving me an operational bishop pair. **12. Bd3 Bb7**. For practical purposes, I would already call the game here and say black is completely lost. Why? If black makes any central thrust, I close the center and start throwing everything at his uncommitted king. The engine gives +1 but as a human, it is much more than that probably. **13. a3 d5** This is the strategic move that was the move that officially sealed black's fate. Because now **14. e5 Nd7??** A blunder. And now the amazing **15. f5! 0-0??** Another mistake. During the game, I understood this because I remember a game Fischer played where he sacrificed a rook in front of the f6 pawn to stifle black's defenses, and so I felt some creativity happening. The party was just getting started. **16. f6!!** GM Ben Finegold would be disappointed but I'm not trying to please him in this game. **16...Bc5??** It is now +18.7, the point of no return. This spells doom for black. For the rest of the game though, there was no need to move the white bishop under attack. That's what makes this is an immortal. **17. fxg7 Kxg7** And now the move to make this truly an immortal that I spent ⅓ of my entire time on. **18. Rf6!!** Preventing black's freeing f5 move if there ever was one, inspired by Bobby Fischer. **18. Nxf6 19. Xf6+ Kh1 20. Qh5** as planned and my untouchable dark squared bishop makes the position what it is. I should mention as well that in this game my accuracy was 98%, so it was an engine approved victory. **1-0**

2021 Iowa Scholastic Online Chess Championship

By James Hodina

On February 20, the Iowa State Chess Association hosted the 2021 Iowa Scholastic Online Chess Championships. The event was played on ChessKid.com, directed by Jim Hodina (Chief), Eric Vigil, and Bill Broich. The tournament had two sections, K-6 and 7-12. Individual and team trophies were awarded. Sixty-two individuals participated and while this number may be a little less than years when held in person, it was a wonderful experience to see students from around the state who might not otherwise have participated.

- IASCA gave the following awards. All awards were either hand delivered or mailed.
- Trophies for top 3 individuals and top 3 teams in Grades K-12, K-9, K-6, and K-3
- Medals for Top 4 Players of Winning Teams
- Medals for Top Score in Each Grade (not otherwise winning a medal)
- Medals for Top Players by Grade Participating in Their 1st Tournament

AidanHoo712IA (729) vs LucasDon712IA (575) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Nc3 Bc5 5.d3 d6 6.Qe2 Nd4 7.Nxd4 exd4 8.Na4 Bb4+ 9.c3 dxc3 10.bxc3 Ba5 11.0-0 0-0 12.Bg5 h6 13.Bh4 c6 14.d4 b5 15.Bxf6 Qxf6 16.e5 Qd8 17.Bd3 1 bxa4 18.Qe4 g6 19.h4 d5 20.Qe3 58 Bxc3 21.Rac1 Ba5 22.Rxc6 Qxh4 23.g3 Qe7 24.Kg2 Qd7 25.Rc2 Qh3+ 26.Kg1 Qe6 27.Kg2 Ba6 28.Bxa6 Qxa6 29.Rh1 Rac8 30.Rxc8 Qxc8 31.Qxh6 f6 1 32.Qh7# 1-0

AshtonCha712IA (861) vs AtticusPow712IA (283) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.f4 Nf6 2.e3 Ne4 3.Bd3 Nd6 4.b3 e6 5.c4 Qh4+ 6.g3 Qh3 7.Qf3 f5 8.e4 fxe4 9.Bxe4 Nf7 10.f5 Bb4 11.Nc3 exf5 12.Qxf5 Qg2 13.Bxg2 Nd6 14.Qh5+ g6 15.Qe5+ Kd8 16.Qxh8+ Ne8 17.a3 Be7 18.Nd5 Bg5 19.d4 d6 20.Bxg5+ Kd7 21.Nf6+ Nxf6 22.Bxf6 Nc6 23.d5 Nd4 24.Qd8# 1-0

AtticusPow712IA (191) vs LoganMil712IA (588) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.Nf3 b6 2.Nc3 Bb7 3.e4 Nc6 4.Nb5 e5 5.d4 a6 6.dxe5 axb5 7.Bg5 f6 8.Bc1 d6 9.Bxb5 dxe5 10.Qe2 Nge7 11.Ba4 Ba6 12.Qe3 f5 13.b3 b5 14.0-0 f4 15.Qxf4 exf4 16.Ba3 bxa4 17.Bxe7 Qxe7 18.Rad1 Bxf1 19.Kxf1 Qxe4 20.Rd8+ Kxd8 21.Ng5 Qxc2 22.Nf7+ Ke8 23.Nxh8 Qd1# 0-1

AtticusPow712IA (232) vs LucasDon712IA (611) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.Nf3 d5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Ne5 Qd6 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.e3 e5 6.Ng5 Be7 7.Bb5 a6 8.Bxc6+ Qxc6 9.f4 exf4 10.0-0 fxe3 11.dxe3 Bg4 12.Qd2 Rd8 13.Qd3 g6 14.Rf2 0-0 15.Qd2 Rfe8 16.e4 dxe4 17.Ne6 fxe6 18.Qh6 Bc5 19.Bg5 Rf8 20.Raf1 Bxf2+ 21.Kxf2 Nd5+ 22.Kg1 Qb6+ 23.Kh1 Rxf1# 0-1

BhargavaMal712IA (1124) vs SatvikaAnb712IA (840) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nf6 3.cxd5 Nxd5 4.Nc3 Nxc3 5.bxc3 Bf5 6.Bf4 e6 7.e3 Bd6 8.Bxd6 Qxd6 9.Nf3 Nc6 10.Bd3 Bxd3 11.Qxd3 e5 12.0-0 exd4 13.cxd4 h6 14.a3 0-0-0 15.a4 g5 16.a5 a6 17.Rfb1 Nb4 18.Qb3 c5 19.dxc5 Qxc5 20.Rc1 Qxc1+ 21.Rxc1+ Kb8 22.Qxb4 Rd7 23.Nd4 Rhd8 24.Nc6+ Kc8 25.Nxd8+ Kxd8 26.h3 f6 27.Qf8# 1-0

MichaelSho712IA (1134) vs SachinRaj712IA (1033) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nc6 3.d3 Bc5 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Nc3 0-0 6.Bg5 d6 7.h3 Qd7 8.0-0 h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bxg5 hxg5 11.Nxg5 Nd4 12.Nd5 Nxd5 13.Bxd5 c6 14.Qh5 Kg7 15.Qh7+ Kf6 16.Qh6+ Ke7 17.Bc4 Ne2+ 18.Kh1 Nd4 19.f4 d5 20.exd5 cxd5 21.Bb3 Nxb3 22.axb3 b6 23.fxe5 Bb7 24.Qf6+ Ke8 25.c3 Qc6 26.Qh6 d4 27.Qxc6+ Bxc6 28.cxd4 Bxd4 29.Rae1 Rg8 30.Ne4 Bxb2 31.Nd6+ Kd7 32.Rxf7+ Ke6 33.Rf6+ Ke7 34.Nf5+ Kd7 35.e6+ Kc7 36.e7 Bxg2+ 37.Kh2 Bxf6 38.Re6 Bd4 39.Nd6 Kd7 40.e8Q+ Rgxe8 41.Nxe8 Rxe8 42.Rxe8 Kxe8 43.Kxg2 a5 44.h4 b5 45.Kf3 Kd7 46.Ke4 Bc3 47.Kd5 a4 48.bxa4 bxa4 49.Kc4 Bb2 50.Kb4 a3 51.Kb3 Be5 52.Kxa3 f6 53.h5 Be5 54.Kb4 Bg7 55.Kc5 Ke7 56.Kd5 Kf7 57.d4 Ke7 58.Kc5 Kd7 59.d5 Bf8+ 60.Kd4 Kd6 61.Ke4 47 Bg7 ½-½

SatvikaAnb712IA (901) vs AshtonCha712IA (620) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.d4 c6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Bf4 Na6 4.e3 Nf6 5.c3 b5 6.Bd3 b4 7.0-0 Nh5 8.Qc2 Nxf4 9.exf4 e6

10.Nbd2 Bd6 11.f5 Qf6 12.fxe6 1:06 fxe6 13.Bxh7 Qh6 14.Bg6+ Kd7 15.h3 bxc3 16.bxc3 10.Nbd2 Bd6 11.f5 Qf6 12.fxe6 fxe6 13.Bxh7 Qh6 14.Bg6+ Kd7 15.h3 bxc3 16.bxc3 c5 17.Ne5+ Ke7 18.Nf7 Rg8 19.Nxh6 Re8 20.Bxe8 Kxe8 21.Qg6+ Kd7 22.Rfe1 Be7 23.Qxe6+Kc7 24.Qxe7+ Bd7 25.Qe5+ Kc8 26.Rab1 cxd4 27.cxd4 Nc7 28.Rec1 gxh6 29.Qxc7# 1-0

LucasDon712IA (683) vs MichaelSho712IA (1115) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.e4 c6 2.Nf3 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.d4 g6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nc6 7.Bb5 Bd7 8.Nxd5 Nxd4 9.Ng1 Bxb5 10.Bxd4 Bxd4 11.Qxd4 Nf6 12.Nxf6+ exf6 13.Qe4+ Kf8 14.Qb4+ Qe7+ 15.Qxe7+ Kxe7 16.Nf3 Rad8 17.Rd1 Rhe8 18.Nd4 Ba6 19.b3 Kf8+ 20.Ne2 Rxe2+ 21.Kf1 Rxd1# 0-1

SatvikaAnb712IA (836) vs AidanKru712IA (1686) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Bf4 c5 4.dxc5 Na6 5.Nc3 Nxc5 6.e3 d6 7.Bc4 Bg7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Bg5 h6 10.Bxf6 Bxf6 11.h3 Qb6 12.b3 Bxc3 13.Rb1 Bd7 14.Qe2 Rac8 15.e4 Be6 16.Bxe6 Nxe6 17.Rbc1 Nd4 18.Nxd4 Bxd4 19.c4 e6 20.Rc2 Rfd8 21.Rd2 Bc5 22.Rfd1 Rc7 23.e5 Rcd7 24.Qe4 Qc6 25.Qxc6 bxc6 26.exd6 Rxd6 27.Rxd6 Rxd6 28.Rxd6 Bxd6 29.Kf1 Kf8 30.Ke2 Ke7 31.Kd3 Bb4 32.f3 Kd6 33.Ke4 a5 34.a4 e5 35.g4 Ke6 36.Ke3 f5 37.gxf5+ Kxf5 38.Kf2 Kf4 39.Kg2 h5 40.Kf2 g5 41.Kg2 g4 42.hxg4 hxg4 43.fxg4 Kxg4 44.Kf2 Kf4 45.Ke2 e4 46.c5 e3 47.Kf1 Kf3 48.Kg1 e2 49.Kh2 e1Q 50.Kh3 Qh1# 0-1

SachinRaj712IA (1007) vs AidanKru712IA (1686) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.e4 g6 2.Nf3 Bg7 3.Bc4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.d4 0-0 6.Be3 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 Nc5 9.Bxc5 dxc5 10.Nxe5 Nxe4 11.Nxe4 Bxe5 12.Qf3 Bf5 13.Rfe1 b6 14.Ng5 Bxh2+ 15.Kxh2 Qxg5 16.Re5 Qh4+ 17.Kg1 Qxc4 18.b3 Qd4 19.g4 Qxg4+ 20.Qxg4 Bxg4 21.Re4 Bf5 22.Re5 Rfe8 23.Rxe8+ Rxe8 24.Rd1 Bxc2 25.Rd2 Bf5 26.d6 Rd8 27.d7 Rxd7 28.Rxd7 Bxd7 29.f3 a5 30.Kf2 Kg7 31.a3 Kf6 32.f4 Kf5 33.Kf3 h5 34.Kg3 Ke4 35.b4 cxb4 36.axb4 axb4 37.f5 Bxf5 38.Kh4 b3 39.Kg3 b2 40.Kf2 b1Q 41.Kg3 Qg1+ 42.Kh4 Qg4# 0-1

AidanKru712IA (1652) vs BhargavaMal712IA (1041) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 g6 3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 Bg7 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 d6 7.Ne2 Nc6 8.0-0 Ne7 9.c4 c6 10.Nbc3 f5 11.Rb1 a5 12.a3 Be6 13.Qb3 Qc7 14.Nf4 a4 15.Nxa4 b5 16.Nxe6 fxe6 17.cxb5 Rab8 18.Rfc1 d5 19.Nc5 Qd6 20.b6 Rf6 21.a4 Nc8 22.b7 Na7 23.Na6 Rff8 24.Nxb8 Rxb8 25.Qb6 Qc7 26.Qxa7 Rxb7 27.Qa8+ Rb8 28.Qxc6 Qe7 29.Qc7 Qe8 30.a5 Bf8 31.a6 Rd8 32.a7 Bd6 33.Qc6 Qf8 34.Ra1 Ra8 35.b4 Bxb4 36.Qxe6+ Kg7 37.Bxd5 Bd2 38.Rc7+ Kh6 39.Bxa8 Qxa8 40.Qc6 Qg8 41.a8Q Qb3 42.Qf8+ Kg5 43.h4+ Kg4 44.f3+ Kh3 45.Qa3 Bxe3+ 46.Kf1 Qg8 47.Qxe3 Qb8 48.Qf2 Qb3 49.Qg2# 1-0

MichaelSho712IA (1065) vs BhargavaMal712IA (1223) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.e4 c5 2.Bc4 Nc6 3.d3 e6 4.Nf3 Nge7 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 b6 7.0-0 Bg7 8.Bg5 0-0 9.d4 cxd4 10.Nxd4 Nxd4 11.Nb5 Nxb5 12.Bxb5 Bb7 13.Re1 Re8 14.Qd2 Bc6 15.Bd3 Qc7 16.Re3 d5 17.exd5 Nxd5 18.Rh3 f5 19.Bh6 Bxh6 20.Qxh6 Nf4 21.Rg3 Re7 22.Bc4 Rae8 23.Rd1 Bd5 24.Bb5 Rc8 25.Rd4 Be4 26.f3 a6 27.Bxa6 e5 28.Bxc8 exd4 29.fxe4 Ne2+ 30.Kf2 Nxg3 31.hxg3 Qxc2+ 32.Kf3 fxe4+ 33.Kf4 Qxc8 34.g4 Qc1+ 35.Kg3 Qxh6 0-1

AshtonCha712IA (487) vs LoganMil712IA (676) Fast Chess ChessKid.com 02.20.21

1.e4 c5 2.Bc4 e6 3.Qf3 Nc6 4.Qf4 g5 5.Qe3 f6 6.b3 Nb4 7.c3 Nc2+ 8.Ke2 Nxa1 9.Bb2 Nc2 10.Qg3 d5 11.exd5 exd5 12.Bd3 Qe7+ 13.Kd1 Ne1 14.Nf3 Nxd3 15.Ba3 h5 16.h3 h4 17.Qh2 Nxf2+ 18.Kc1 Nxh1 19.Qxh1 Nh6 20.g4 f5 21.Qg1 fxg4 22.hxg4 Nxg4 23.Nh2 Nxh2 24.Qxh2 Qe1+ 25.Kc2 Bf5+ 26.d3 c4 27.Nd2 Bxd3+ 28.Kb2 cxb3 29.axb3 Bxa3+ 30.Kxa3 Qa1+ 31.Kb4 b6 32.Qe5+ Kf7 33.Qf5+ Bxf5 34.c4 Qa5# 0-1

Trophies for top 3 individuals and top 3 teams in Grades K-12, K-9, K-6, and K-3

Trophies for Top Individuals Overall

Grades K-3

1. Holm, Kelton
2. Ajoykumar, Aarud
3. Veeder, Cole Francis

Grades 4-6

1. Muthuraman, AdwaiythNossuli, Julien
2. Bujakowski, Stan

Grades 7-9

1. Krueger, Aidan
2. Malya, Bhargava
3. Rajan, Sachin

Grades 10-12

1. Miller, Logan Gerard

K-6 Trophies for Top Teams (Top 4 player totals, ties shown but only counted once)

1. Cedar Rapids Prairie Creek Intermediate School (14 points)
   - Holm, Kelton (5.0)
   - Wong, Vincent H (4.0)
   - Puetz, Logan (3.0)
   - Netolicky, Sophia (2.0)
   - Criswell, Henry E (2.0)
   - Leroy, Dalton (2.0)
2. Coralville Central Elementary S (12)
   - Bujakowski, Stan (4.0)
   - Hammes, Wyatt William (3.5,)
   - Bujakowska, Krysty (3.0)
   - Shonrock, Sadie (1.5)
3. Ankeny Southeast Elementary (9)
   - Peterson-Burch, Kayden (3.5)
   - Banh, Logan T (2.0)
   - Ray, Lucius Paxton (2.0)
   - Peterson-Burch, Keegen D (1.5)
   - Peterson-Burch, Kelden (1.5)

K-3 Trophies (Players in K-6 trophy cannot count toward K-3 trophy)

1. Coralville (2 Points)
   - Huynh, Khang Kaison, Grade 2
   - Powell, Darb, Grade 1
2. Prairie Creek (1.5 Points)
   - Bear, Jack, Grade
   - Criswell, Munro Lawrence, Grade 1

K-9 Trophies for Top Teams (Top 4 player totals)

1. South Middle School (6.5)
   - Rajan, Sachin (2.5)
   - Anbukumar, Satvika Vijay (2.0)
   - Chandavong, Ashton (2.0)
2. Northwest Junior High School (1.5)
   - Shonrock, Michael Aaron (1.5)
   - Powell, Atticus

Medals for Top Score in Each Grade (Not otherwise winning trophy or medal)

1. Bear, Jack
2. Cao, Max
3. Cole Veeder
4. Hammes, Wyatt William
5. Wong, Vincent H
6. Merrill, Evan
7. Hoovik, Aidan James
8. Shonrock, Michael Aaron

Medals for Top Players by Grade Participating in Their 1st Tournament (Not otherwise winning trophy or medal)

1. Powell, Darby
2. Shah, Eeshaan
3. Peterson-Burch, Keegen D
4. Vrba, Peyton Matthew
5. Netolicky, Sophia
6. Loeb, Alston
7. Chandavong, Ashton
8. Powell, Atticus

Puzzle Answers

Below are the solutions to the 10 puzzles listed earlier in the newsletter.

Problem 1.
1. h5+ Kh6
2. Nf7#

Problem 2.
1. Qxh6+ gxh6
2. Be5#

Problem 3.
1. Qxe5+ Kxe5
2. Bb2#

Problem 4.
1. Bxb6 cxb6
2. f4 Qd6
3. fxe5

Problem 5.
1. Nd5 g6
2. Nxf6+ Bxf6
3. Qxf6

Problem 6.
1. Nd4+ Kxd5
2. Qb5+ Kxd4
3. c3+ Ke4
4. Bd3#

Problem 7.
1. Rxd1 Bxe5
2. Nh6+ Kh8
3. Qxe5 Qxe5
4. Nxf7+ Rxf7
5. Rd8+ Qe8
6. Rxe8+ Rf8
7. Rxf8#

Problem 8.
1. Qh6 Rxg3
2. Bg6 Rxg6
3. fxg6 fxg6
4. Qxf8#

Problem 9.
1. h5+ Rxh5
2. f5+ Rxf5
3. g4 Rf4
4. Bf5+ Rxf5
5. Ng7 Rh1
6. gxf5#

Problem 10.
Chekhover (Study -1947)
1. Kd1!! Rh2
2. Ke1! Rxg2
3. Kf1 Rh2
4. Kg1! Rh5
5. f3!=

Even down a rook, white can hold since black cannot infiltrate the position on the kingside or queenside.

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Bala Shuckla the COVID-2020 Champion, a tournament brought on by the Leather necks Chess Club in Feb 2021.